

_____ BILL NO. _____

INTRODUCED BY _____

(Primary Sponsor)

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT APPROPRIATING FUNDS FOR MONTANA'S AREA AGENCIES ON AGING."

WHEREAS, the number of Montanans who are 65 years of age or older has increased nearly 70% since 1970, and Montana's elder population now makes up 13% of the state's population; and

WHEREAS, the 10 Montana area agencies on aging serve as the focal point for coordination and delivery of critically important services that allow Montana's aging residents to remain in their homes, including in-home services such as home-delivered meals, skilled nursing, personal care, and home chores; community services such as senior centers, group meals, legal assistance, caregiver support, volunteer opportunities, and health promotions; and services such as transportation, outreach, information, and assistance programs that allow seniors to access services they need; and

WHEREAS, federal and state funding for the area agencies on aging has remained relatively unchanged for the past several decades while the elder population has grown dramatically; and

WHEREAS, providing services to the growing number of aging residents in Montana's far-flung rural communities has become increasingly difficult as the cost of providing services rises while funding remains static; and

WHEREAS, local property taxpayers are more frequently being asked to cover the rising costs of providing services to seniors.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

NEW SECTION. Section 1. Appropriation. There is appropriated \$4 million from the state general fund to the department of public health and human services for each year of the biennium beginning July 1, 2007, to be allocated according to the funding formula now in place for distributing funds to the state's area agencies on aging. The area agencies shall use the funds to provide in-home, community, or access services to eligible Montanans in their respective planning and service areas.

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